



Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

Serving Bethesda, Cabin John, Chevy Chase, Friendship Heights, Garrett Park, Glen Echo,
North Bethesda, Potomac, Rockville, and Twinbrook

April 20, 2023

Hon. Natali Fani-González
Chair
Economic Development Committee
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Chair Fani-González:

The Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board (WMCCAB) supports **full funding for the Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP)**, which is a revenue-driving county asset that helps downtown Bethesda draw and sustain job-creating, tax-paying business, while supporting a safe, pleasant, cultural and entertainment district for all residents. Last December, WMCCAB provided a list of recommendations regarding BUP to the County Executive as part of the operating budget process, and we continue to support those requests. (See attached.)

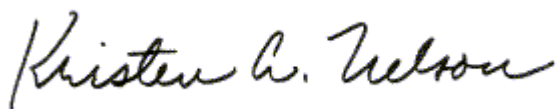
While BUP has a wide array of programs that the CAB supports, we would draw your attention to three specific issues under consideration:

- Compensation: BUP staff operated for **five years without a pay increase**. Maintaining and hiring BUP's highly effective team demands appropriate and competitive compensation.
- Rat control: The county's urban areas have suffered **from rat infestation** for several years, creating a health threat and scaring off visitors just as "streateries" are helping to revive commerce. BUP's budget for rat-proof trash cans will supplement other rodent control services the County is pursuing. Please protect this urban center by funding rat-control efforts, including rat-proof trash cans.
- Recycling: Montgomery County has a **stated goal of achieving zero waste** in the next decade, but the only way that will happen is with accessible, sustainable tools. Providing funding for recycling bins is a cost-effective and simple way to help the county pursue its goals.

Please keep in mind that BUP faces the same inflationary cost increases as any business, but through excellent management and operational efficiencies, it has continued to serve the community. Consider, for example, that BUP operates the free Bethesda Circulator for 11 percent less than a comparable RideOn route.

We urge you to support Montgomery County's community, business, equity, environmental, and sustainability goals by supporting full funding for BUP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kristen A. Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kristen" being more prominent than the last name "Nelson".

Chair
Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

CC:

Hon. Marilyn Balcombe

Hon. Andrew Friedson

Hon. Evan Glass

Hon. Laurie-Anne Sayles

Peter Fosselman, Director, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services

Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board

Tommy Heyboyer, Chief of Staff for Natali Fani-González

Cindy Gibson, Chief of Staff for Andrew Friedson

Lisa Mandel-Trupp, Chief of Staff for Marilyn Balcombe

Valeria Carranza, Chief of Staff for Evan Glass

Ronald Ikheloa, Chief of Staff for Laurie-Anne Sayles

Jane Fairweather, Chair, BUP

Jeff Burton, Executive Director, BUP